

tion from which his fellows have escaped, and
may be killed
by any man without injustice.

Having decided on their ruler his subjects
become responsible for all his actions. If it is a monarch they
cannot without his leave cast off monarchy. Moreover, though
they are irrevocably bound to him, he is in no way
bound to them. There can be no breach of covenant by the
sovereign, for no conditions were made when he received his
power. No conditions could have been made, for covenants are
but words unless there is power to enforce them; and such
power does not exist till a sovereign is set up. To complain
of the use which he makes of his power is illogical, for by
the institution of a commonwealth every man is author of all his
acts. He that complaineth of injury from his sovereign
complaineth of that whereof he himself is the author, and
therefore ought not to accuse any man but himself.^{5*} The
sovereign may commit iniquity but not injustice, and he is not
subject to punishment. He alone is judge of what is
necessary for the peace and defence of his subjects, and it is to
his interest to treat them properly. It is also his task to decide
what opinions and doctrines are dangerous to peace and to
examine all books before publication; for actions proceed from
ideas. He must also lay down the rules of property, decide all
disputes, reward and punish, choose all counsellors and
magistrates, and control the army. He is not subject to the
laws which he makes. The task with which he was entrusted is
to procure the safety of the people. He is obliged to carry it
out by the law of nature, and to render an account to God,
the author of that law; but only to him. A kingdom divided
against itself cannot stand, as was proved by the civil war. He
expressly declares that the book was occasioned by the

disorders of the time. He cares little whether the government is a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy, for the rules are always the same. Some man or some assembly must possess undisputed power.

After thus concentrating power in a single hand and calmly proclaiming that might is right, Hobbes pauses to answer the most obvious criticism. "A man may here object that the condition of subjects is very miserable, as being obnoxious to the lusts and other irregular passions of him or them that have so unlimited a power in their hands/* He retorts that the greatest evils of government are trifles compared to the horrible calamities of civil war or of the anarchy inevitable in